



High school football kicks into gear as teams like Bellevue West and Omaha Central open their seasons. Pages C4-C5

Omaha World-Herald SPORTS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 2024
SECTION C



HOME (AGAIN) WHERE THE START IS

After four straight season openers on the road, NU gets throwback: home start

EVAN BLAND

World-Herald Staff Writer

LINCOLN — The Nebraska buses will roll to a stop at 14th and Vine Streets at about 12:15 p.m. Saturday. Awaiting players and coaches there is a four-minute walk to the team facility as fans cheer them on.

"Does it take four minutes for us?" coach Matt Rhule asked chief of staff Susan Elza this week. Four minutes and seven seconds, she replied.

The second-year head man gave a nod and small smile. Home is where the start is to a season where the Huskers will take every edge they can find.

A 2:30 p.m. kickoff against UTEP at Memorial Stadium won't move the national needle much. Which is fine after four straight high-exposure road trips against Big Ten opponents all began seasons with

Please see NU FOOTBALL, Page C7

UTEP AT
NEBRASKA

2:30 p.m. Saturday

Memorial Stadium

Fox, 92.3, 590

It's welcome sights — and a welcome mat — in many ways for the Huskers and fans in this season opener.

WORLD-HERALD PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

To bring winning and fire back to NU program, it has to start with a spark



TOM SHATEL

INCOLN — There's nothing like opening day in Football Town, U.S.A.

From Auburn to Alliance, the lights turn on a little earlier, lucky red shirts are cleaned and pressed. It feels like cars even go a little faster on opening day, fueled by an extra adrenaline rush.

All roads lead to Lincoln.

The red carpet is rolled out all over downtown, bars serve large cups of hope and dreams, all to welcome the migration home of the species known as the Husker football fanatic.

Please see SHATEL, Page C7

VOLLEYBALL: NO. 12
CREIGHTON DEF. NC
STATE 25-18, 25-20,
25-13

'Shockingly clean' Jays impress in opening win

JON WALKER

World-Herald Staff Writer

Creighton volleyball coach Kirsten Bernthal Booth likes a challenge. It's why she invited three solid teams to Omaha for opening weekend.

Friday night wasn't a challenge, though.

The No. 12 Bluejays, donning new threads in front of the third-largest crowd in Sokol Arena history, started the season with a 25-18, 25-20, 25-13 win over North Carolina State on Friday night to sweep their fifth consecutive opener.

"We just feel like that's



MEGAN NIELSEN, THE WORLD-HERALD
Creighton impressed in its season debut on Friday, sweeping North Carolina State before a record crowd at Sokol Arena.



NIKOS FRAZIER, THE WORLD-HERALD
Nebraska scored 10 straight points to open its win over Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, with setter Bergen Reilly posting three aces during that stretch. Reilly finished with five aces in the first set, setting a new career high.

VOLLEYBALL: NO.
2 NEBRASKA DEF.
TAMCC 25-9, 25-20,
25-15

Reilly helps NU serve up sweep after strong start

BRENT C. WAGNER

Lincoln Journal Star

LINCOLN — Nebraska got off to a strong start in its first home match of the season on Friday, winning the first 10 points of the first set on the way to a 25-9, 25-20, 25-15 win against Texas A&M-Corpus Christi.

Setter Bergen Reilly served the unreal start, posting three aces.

The Huskers started in a rotation with Lindsay Krause, Rebekah Allick and Merritt Beason at the net, a group with the potential to overmatch many teams.

Please see NU VOLLEYBALL, Page C2

Please see CU VOLLEYBALL, Page C2

BRIEFLY**SOCER****NU-CU match moved**

After having its match with UNO postponed due to inclement weather, Nebraska announced it is moving the start time of its match against Creighton.

NU will now face the Bluejays at 1:05 p.m. Monday.

The match at Hibner Stadium was originally scheduled for Sunday, but the NU athletic office says tickets will still be valid for Monday's match.

Nebraska (1-2) is looking to bounce back from a 3-0 loss last week to Duke.

FOOTBALL**Tar Heels QB out**

North Carolina quarterback Max Johnson will miss the rest of the season after having surgery for a broken right leg, coming after he was carted off in the season-opening win at Minnesota and taken to the hospital.

The school announced Johnson's status on Friday, saying he had surgery in Minneapolis and is accompanied by his parents there. He will return to Chapel Hill soon and is expected to make a full recovery.

Conner Harrell, who played for the Tar Heels in last season's bowl game after Drake Maye declared for the draft, led the team the rest of the way in Thursday's 19-17 win at Minnesota and would be positioned to take over the starting job for Saturday's home game against Charlotte.

Johnson, the son of former NFL quarterback Brad Johnson, had transferred from Texas A&M and won the starting job over Harrell to replace Maye, the No. 3 overall NFL draft pick. But he was hurt when his leg bent awkwardly as he was taken to the ground on a blitz by Justin Walley in the third quarter of the game.

Johnson immediately clutched his leg around the knee and stayed down for several minutes before being carted off the field.

The fifth-year quarterback, who started his career with two years at LSU, finished 12 for 19 for 71 yards with one interception while also running for a score. The team awarded Johnson a game ball afterward.

Pitt RB ineligible

PITTSBURGH — Pitt running back Rodney Hammond Jr. has been declared ineligible and will miss the 2024 season, the school announced Friday.

No reason was provided, but Hammond remains a member of the team and can practice, the school said.

Hammond, in his fourth year, led the Panthers in rushing last year with 564 yards and scored four touchdowns.

Desmond Reid was listed as co-No. 1 on the depth chart at running back heading into Pitt's opener Saturday at home against Kent State.

Reid is a third-year transfer from Western Carolina, where he played for new Pitt offensive coordinator Kade Bell and ran for 897 yards and 13 touchdowns last season.

Midland pulls away

Midland used a 28-point fourth quarter to pull away to a 45-7 win over Clarke (Iowa) in its opener in Fremont.

Tyson Denkert had two TD runs before starting the fourth quarter with a 44-yard punt return touchdown with 12:06 left. Teryn Berry threw two TD passes in the fourth.

Denkert, a Kenesaw grad, finished with 174 yards on 18 carries. Midland's defense created four turnovers.

Dolphins extend coach

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — The Miami Dolphins want Mike McDaniel to be around for a while.

The coach who was just the third Dolphins coach to make the playoffs in each of his first two seasons at the helm signed a contract Friday that extends him through the 2028 season. His initial contract was going to expire in 2025.

A person familiar with the deal confirmed the news first reported by ESPN, speaking to the Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal hadn't been announced.

The Dolphins have gone 20-14 in two seasons under McDaniel, who was hired in 2022 to replace Brian Flores. In the first head coaching job of his nearly two-decades long career, McDaniel led the Dolphins to back-to-back playoff appearances for the first time since 2000-01.

McDaniel made a name for himself rather quickly in Miami, whether for his tendency to go viral for his quick wit and quirky idiosyncrasies, or for the rapid offensive success that he's ushered in on a Dolphins team that had long struggled on that side of the ball.

VOLLEYBALL: HOUSTON DEF. UNO 25-20, 16-25, 25-23, 23-25, 15-7**WORLD-HERALD NEWS SERVICE**

Houston never trailed in the fifth set as the Cougars outlasted UNO 25-20, 16-25, 25-23, 23-25, 15-7 in the season opener at Baxter Arena.

After the Mavs won a tight fourth set, Houston quickly grabbed the momentum by winning the first three points of the fifth. UNO was within 7-4 but that's as close the Mavs got the rest of the way.

UNO committed eight hitting errors in the final set when it hit minus-.263.

UNO featured a balanced offense as Shayla McCormick

was one of four Mavs with double-digit kills. She had 17 kills and 14 digs, while McKenna Ruch had 12 kills and three blocks. Freshman Celia Spilker led the Mavs with five blocks.

UNO rallied from 16-12 down in the first set, pulling within 19-18 on an Erica Fava ace. But Houston finished the set on a 6-2 run.

After hitting .063 in the first set, UNO settled in during the second. The Mavs scored five straight for a 9-4 lead and pulled away from there. The lead was 13-7 after back-to-back aces by Ruch, then Kali Jurgensmeier delivered her seventh kill of the set on set

point. Jurgensmeier had 11 kills on the night.

UNO led most of the third set as it stretched the lead to 17-11 on a Shayla McCormick kill. The Mavs' lead was 22-19 before Houston won six of the next seven points to take the set. Rebecca Rocassin served an ace for the final point.

Then the fourth set was close throughout as it featured 17 ties and both teams had a hitting percentage of .214. But the final tie was 23-23 and then Amanda Hardt delivered her 10th kill of the night and Ruch served her fifth ace of the night.

Ivy Leuck also had a dou-

ble-double with 30 assists and 11 digs for UNO, which will face Wyoming at 4 p.m. Saturday. Wyoming also played five sets Friday as it outlasted Washington State 15-11 in the fifth.

Houston (1-0) 25 16 25 23 15
At UNO (0-1) 20 25 23 25 15
UH (kills-aces-blocks): Corelli 14-0-1, Grieve 12-2-2, Shimaitis 11-0-1, Rahmon 7-0-5, Barron 6-1-3, Pohl 3-0-5, Cooke 2-1-0, Rocassin 0-1-0, Georgiades 0-1-0. Totals: 55-6-17.

UNO: McCormick 17-1-4, Ruch 12-5-3, Jurgensmeier 11-0-2, Hardt 10-0-1, Arnold 7-0-1, Spilker 1-0-5, Owens 0-2-0, Fava 0-1-0. Totals: 58-5-16.

Set assists: UH 55 (Cooke 30, Rocassin 17, Georgiades 4, Barron 2, Grieve 1, Torres-Rivera 1), UNO 54 (Leuck 30, Owens 1, Schaefer 4, Jurgensmeier 1), Digs: UH 66 (Georgiades 25, Barron 10, Grieve 9, Rocassin 7, Cooke 7, Corelli 5, Shimaitis 1, Pohl 1, Rahmon 1), UNO 74 (Fava 15, McCormick 14, Leuck 11, Schaefer 10, Owens 7, Jurgensmeier 6, Hardt 4, Ruch 3, Arnold 2, Spilker 2).

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

American League			
Boston 7, Detroit 5, 10 innings			
Houston 3, Kansas City 2			
Minnesota 2, Toronto 0			
Oakland at Texas, late			
Seattle at L.A. Angels, late			
National League			
Milwaukee 5-14, Cincinnati 4-0, 10 innnings			
Atlanta 7, Philadelphia 2			
Chicago Cubs 7, Washington 6			
L.A. Dodgers at Arizona, late			
Miami at San Francisco, late			
Interleague			
San Diego 13, Tampa Bay 5			
N.Y. Yankees 6, St. Louis 3			
Cleveland 10, Pittsburgh 8			
N.Y. Mets at Chicago White Sox, late			
Baltimore (Kremer 6-9) at Colorado (Feltner 1-0), 7:10 p.m.			
Saturday			
American League			
Boston (Pivetta 5-9) at Detroit (Skubal 15-4), 5:10 p.m.			
Oakland (Estes 6-6) at Texas (Bradford 4-2), 6:05 p.m.			
Kansas City (Ragans 10-8) at Houston (Kikuchi 6-9), 6:10 p.m.			
Toronto (Berrios 13-9) at Minnesota (Matthews 1-1), 6:10 p.m.			
Seattle (Woo 6-2) at Los Angeles (Anderson 10-12), 8:38 p.m.			
National League			
Chicago (Assad 6-4) at Washington (Herz 2-6), 3:05 p.m.			
Atlanta (Fried 8-7) at Philadelphia (Wheeler 12-6), 6:15 p.m.			
Milwaukee (Montas 6-9) at Cincinnati (TBD), 6:15 p.m.			
Los Angeles (Stone 11-5) at Arizona (Kelly 4-0), 7:10 p.m.			
Miami (Cabrera 2-6) at San Francisco (TBD), 8:05 p.m.			
Interleague			
St. Louis (Gibson 7-6) at N.Y. Yankees (Warren 0-2), 12:05 p.m.			
Friday			

San Diego (Vásquez 4-6) at Tampa Bay (Baz 1-2), 3:10 p.m.
Pittsburgh (Ortiz 5-4) at Cleveland (Boyd 1-0), 5:10 p.m.
N.Y. Mets (Quintana 6-9) at Chicago White Sox (Martin 0-2), 6:10 p.m.
Baltimore (Kremer 6-9) at Colorado (Feltner 1-0), 7:10 p.m.

Cody Bellinger homered to cap a seven-run second inning.

Chicago 070 000 000-7 9 0
At Washington 201 000 003-6 8 0
W: Imanaga, 11-3, L: Irvin, 9-11. S: Thompson (2). HR: CHC, Bellinger (14). Was, Crews (2).

Interleague

PADRES 13, RAYS 5
Manny Machado hit a three-run homer, his 161st as a Padre, bringing him within two of Nate Colbert 50-year franchise record.

San Diego 341 200 003-13 13 1
At Tampa Bay 040 000 010-5 10 1
W: Pérez 4-5, L: Bradley 6-9, R: San Diego, Machado 12, D. Peralta (7), Bogaerts (7). Tampa Bay, Y. Diaz (12).

YANKEES 6, CARDINALS 3

St. Louis 002 000 010-3 10 0
At New York 013 000 02X-6 6 1
W: Stroman, 10-6, L: Fedde, 8-8, S: Holmes (29). HRS: St. Louis, Arenado (15). New York, Wells (12).

GUARDIANS 10, PIrates 8

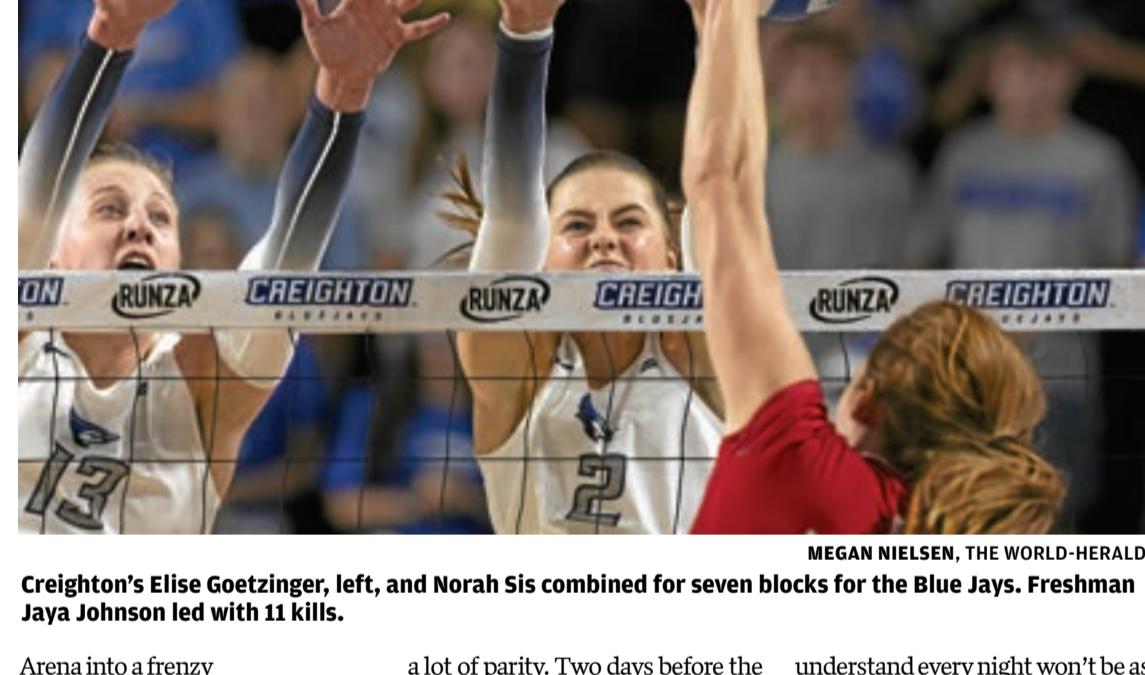
Rookie Jhongensky Noel hit a two-run homer and Andrés Giménez followed with a solo shot in the fifth inning.

Pittsburgh 000 061 001-8 12 1
At Cleveland 200 240 02X-10 16 0
W: Avila, 5-1, L: Mlodzinski, 2-5, S: Clase (40). HR: Pit, Tellez (12), McCutchen (17), Cle, Noel (13), Giménez (6).

Notes/span>

Pasquantino breaks thumb: Royals first baseman Vinnie Pasquantino will miss the rest of the regular season after breaking his right thumb while trying to make a play at first base, the team announced Friday. Pasquantino is expected to undergo additional testing, but the team said he would miss six to eight weeks. Kansas City called up Nick Pratto from Omaha to fill his spot on the roster.

Bohm sidelined: Philadelphia third baseman Alec Bohm didn't start Friday, a day after he injured his left hand during an at-bat. The Omaha Roncalli grad, who leads the NL with 44 doubles, appeared to hurt his hand on an awkward swing. "There's no structural damage, so we got a break," Phillies manager Rob Thomson said.



MEGAN NIELSEN, THE WORLD-HERALD

Creighton's Elise Goetzinger, left, and Norah Sis combined for seven blocks for the Blue Jays. Freshman Jaya Johnson led with 11 kills.

Arena into a frenzy

The Wolfpack controlled the first few points of the second. Midway through the set, Martin and Sis were hitting .071 combined while NC State built a lead, one that vanished because of Goetzinger and Johnson.

Goetzinger (10 kills on .471) tied the second set at 8-all. NC State jumped back in front, and she responded with a hard-hit kill that made its way through the Wolfpack and to the hardwood. Another Goetzinger kill two points later put the Jays back in the driver's seat.

Then Johnson — six kills on nine swings in the second — rode that momentum and went to work.

"We got everyone really, really involved in the match. Sometimes we're really heavy to the outside if we get out of system a lot," Booth said. "Great night against a great NC State team."

The Jays, Booth said, played with

a lot of parity. Two days before the matchup, that's exactly what she expected from NC State. It's why Booth figured the Wolfpack would be such a tough out.

NC State got good nights out of Ava Brizard and Amanda Rice, the two combining to hit .242 with 14 kills, but they were the exceptions.

With two defensive specialists in the starting six, the Jays held the Wolfpack to .134 — their worst hitting performance since going -.038 against Pittsburgh last October.

"Wow," said Booth, who attributed that to a couple of factors. "I think we served well and they were out of system a ton, which a block to set up. ... I thought our backcourt defense was tenacious."

The Jays, Johnson said, aren't cocky coming off a season-opening win that solidified the standard they've had set for a month. They

understand every night won't be as easy as Friday looked.

Saturday surely won't be.

Creighton gets Missouri, an SEC sleeper that added a handful of key transfers this offseason, and Booth is expecting nothing short of a dog fight.

"I love playing fantastic teams, and Missouri is a fantastic team," Booth said. "Our adage is, enjoy this for a couple moments and get a good night's sleep and be ready for a battle tomorrow."